

Joint statement from AoC, AELP, HOLEX, FAB, JCQ and Ofqual on VTQs

This summer has been extraordinary for everyone involved in awarding vocational and technical qualifications. It has been an anxious time for learners and has involved a huge amount of hard work for centres and awarding organisations (AOs).

Everyone in the sector has worked collaboratively to issue valid and reliable VTQ results to learners in order for them to progress onto the next stage of their education or into work. It is a significant achievement that millions of certificates were issued, for thousands of different qualifications.

We recognise and acknowledge, however, that this achievement has been a great challenge for all concerned, and will continue to be so. Colleagues right across the sector, both in centres and awarding organisations, had to make enormous efforts to secure results for learners, rapidly developing and implementing new systems and processes. Particular credit is due to our colleagues working in centres for their hard work and professionalism.

It is important to learn the lessons from the summer, in particular how the sector can work together even more effectively to improve communications and the exchange of information between centres and AOs so that things run more smoothly in 2020/21.

You may have seen that Ofqual has been consulting on the regulatory framework for 2020/21, which is, like this summer's framework, flexible to ensure that AOs can put in place arrangements and adaptations that best suit their qualifications. But we are conscious of the need to ensure as much consistency as possible, and we recognise that collaboration will be key.

AoC, AELP, HOLEX, FAB, JCQ, Ofqual, have therefore committed to work together, convening a working group to agree how centre-facing communications can be streamlined over the current academic year.

As a first step, we have jointly agreed that, by 23 October, awarding organisations will have started to communicate to centres their planned approach to any adaptations to their qualifications for 2020/21, to assist in mitigating disruption to teaching, learning and assessments so that, as far as possible, learners have the opportunity to receive fair results in 2020 to 2021 and are not disadvantaged by the longer-term impacts of the pandemic. We will be strongly encouraging awarding organisations to keep their centres fully informed as plans develop, and we will use this group to co-ordinate milestones and communications, and to address issues arising through the year.

A number of subject and sector groups (for example, covering Functional Skills Qualifications, and Hair and Beauty Qualifications) have work well underway to support consistent approaches to adaptations of qualifications in

2020/21.

We are pleased to confirm that CCEA Regulation and Qualifications Wales will also be part of the working group going forward, and we commit to updating you on a regular basis as decisions are made and clarity achieved.